

areas;
dividing the surface of the wafer into positive areas and negative areas, the negative areas including the edge areas of the wafer;
providing the negative areas with a first passivation layer to protect the negative areas from a subsequent second etching process;
providing at least one of the positive areas with a second passivation layer having a thickness that is less than a thickness of the first passivation layer;
selectively removing the second passivation layer via a first etching process, the first etching process being terminated when the second passivation layer is completely removed;
etching the wafer via the second etching process; and
removing the first passivation layer.

It is respectfully submitted that Pearce, Burns, and Perng, either individually or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest "selectively removing the second passivation layer via a first etching process, the first etching process being terminated when the second passivation layer is completely removed," as recited in amended claim 14.

For the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that claim 14 and claims 15-24, which ultimately depend from claim 14, are allowable over Pearce, Burns, and Perng. Accordingly, it is kindly requested that the rejections of these claims under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(a) and 103(a) be withdrawn.

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS:

Kindly amend claim 14 as follows:

14. (Amended) A method of etching a wafer, comprising the steps of:

providing a wafer having a surface and edge areas;
dividing the surface of the wafer into positive areas and negative areas, the negative areas including the edge areas of the wafer;

providing the negative areas with a first passivation layer to protect the negative areas from a subsequent [wet chemical] second etching process;

providing at least one of the positive areas with a second passivation layer having a thickness that is less than a thickness of the first passivation layer;

selectively removing the second passivation layer via a first etching process, the first etching process being terminated when the second passivation layer is completely removed;

etching the wafer [in the wet chemical] via the second etching process; and

removing the first passivation layer.